

Statement of Ranking Member Donald Payne, Jr. (D-NJ)

**Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and
Communications**

“HOMELAND SECURITY GRANTS: MEASURING OUR INVESTMENTS”

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Before I move forward with my opening statement, I would like to commend FEMA’s response, recovery and relief efforts related to Hurricane Sandy.

As a native of New Jersey, I can attest to the severe damage caused to our public and private properties, critical infrastructure and transportation systems.

Your coordinated efforts to foster regional collaboration with our local first responders and neighboring States, is a testament of the “whole community” approach.

Today we will discuss FEMA’s efforts to measure the return on investments from homeland security grants provided to States and locals, as well as identify and close preparedness gaps with homeland security resources.

Also, we are eager to learn more about FEMA’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 impractical proposal to consolidate 16 vital homeland security grants under the National Preparedness Grant Program (NPGP).

FEMA’s homeland security grants have enhanced State, territory, local, and tribal governments capabilities to plan, coordinate, and train to prepare for and respond to natural disasters, terrorist attacks or other catastrophic situations.

Since FY 2002, Congress has appropriated \$39 billion for homeland security grants.

Congress – and FEMA – would like to use this hearing to further investigate and understand the returns on investment taxpayers are receiving from the grant program.

We hope to determine how homeland security grants have specifically helped our communities become further equipped to handle threats and natural disasters and how we can sustain our preparedness.

It’s for this reason that Congress has directed FEMA to establish performance metrics that will allow States and Urban Areas to report the capabilities they’ve built with Federal funding.

Over the years, FEMA has presented plans to gauge the effectiveness of its homeland security grants, however, it’s a history of mostly unsuccessful attempts.

The OIG, GAO and the National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA) released respective findings that FEMA must do the following:

- Improve its guidance in establishing performance metrics and measurements.
- Establish a qualitative and quantitative framework to measure grants performance.
- Develop and implement a system for assessing national preparedness capabilities.

In addition to the findings of the OIG, GAO, and NAPA, staff have learned that critical information about the success of grant programs such as UASI, MMRS, and others have not been properly conveyed to Congress.

It would be unfortunate for wholesale changes and cuts to be made to our grant programs that will result in the elimination of capabilities necessary to meet the complex challenges of emergencies because FEMA has not clearly presented the efforts of States and locals.

Mr. Manning, I admire FEMA's attempts to promote efficiencies and streamline the grant process.

But I am confounded to hear from our homeland security stakeholders about the Department's audacity to move forward with implementation of the NPGP despite Congressional opposition.

Last year, the Senate and House rejected this proposal because it lacked necessary details and stakeholder outreach.

Last week, the Senate Appropriators released the Consolidated and Further Appropriations Act for FY 2013, which rejected the NPGP proposal due to lack of justification, and includes bill language prohibiting obligation of funds for such program or any successor program unless authorized by Congress.

Congress created discrete programs to direct grant investments to address specific gaps in national and local preparedness capabilities.

Measuring preparedness is a difficult task, but I hope this hearing will help us better understand how FEMA can successfully move forward in achieving its goals of ensuring that local communities have the necessary tools, resources, and processes to keep their people safe.

I look forward to hearing FEMA's response to our concerns, and its efforts to implement performance measures.